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Fitzgerald impeached by Council

by Ken Burke

In a debate which surprised some in its single-mindedness of purpose, Dal' student council overwhelmingly voted to impeach student senator Greg Fitzgerald at last Sunday's Council meeting. Fitzgerald was not present at the meeting.

Fitzgerald was faced with a motion of impeachment for "gross dereliction of duty" after it was discovered that he had embezzled money while treasurer of a "B" society, concurrent with his term as a student councillor. During his stay as Treasurer of AIESEC (a society for economics students), Fitzgerald forged cheques worth \$860. He paid back the money over the course of the summer.

"I think the thing that surprised us was the overwhelming nature of the vote," said student union president Peter Rans. The motion of impeachment passed by a vote of 24 for, none against, and only 3

councillors - Linda King, Phil Dunn, and Phillip Fraser - abstaining from voting. A 2/3 majority of Council was required for the impeachment.

There had previously been some question over whether a letter of resignation which Fitzgerald had sent to Rans would be accepted. Accepting the resignation would negate the impeachment process. Rans had received the letter, dated September 1, on September 15, four days before the Council meeting.

At the meeting, Rans placed the resignation before Council. Council Treasurer Shawn Houlihan, who moved the initial impeachment motion, then brought forward a motion that Council not accept the resignation of Fitzgerald. The motion was seconded by Board of Governors representative Jay

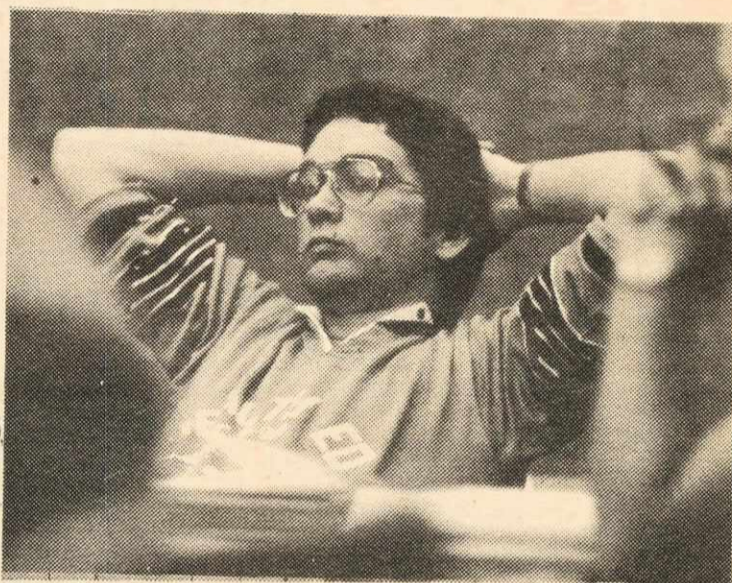
Doucet. After some discussion of the merits of rejecting as opposed to accepting the resignation, Atul Sharma (a Board of Governors representative) moved to table (i.e. hold) the motion of resignation until the impeachment motion had either passed or failed. Sharma's motion to table passed with 17 for, none against, and 10 abstentions.

In a related move, after the impeachment debate, notice of motion was given by Senate representative Chris Hartt. Hartt's motion states "That council require the employees of the Student Union or "A" and "B" societies using Dalhousie's name or funds be required to report any and all instances of theft to the police". This motion will be discussed at the next full Council meeting on October 3.

Rans felt the motion by Hartt "should have some weight", adding that he personally would like to see similar motions enshrined in constitutions of all Dal societies. "I think they (societies) have an obligation to prevent people walking around campus doing that (illegal activities)," said Rans.

Once the motion concerning Fitzgerald's resignation was tabled, Council began debating the impeachment motion itself.

Houlihan immediately set out to establish Fitzgerald's guilt in the AIESEC embezzlement. "Fitzgerald admitted to doing it several times," stated Houlihan, who then circulated copies of the forged cheques and a letter from last year's AIESEC president, Keith Parady,



Morris/Dal Photo

Councillor Frank Dunn relaxes during a break in the Fitzgerald Impeachment motion debate.

concerning the affair.

Pardy's letter stated, "While acting as Treasurer of AIESEC (Dalhousie), Gregory Fitzgerald forged my name on AIESEC cheques. He did this without the knowledge or consent of me." The letter was dated June 23, 1982.

Councillors expressed an almost unanimous support for the motion in speeches given before the casting of the roll call vote. "I wouldn't want to be associated with a council that could allow this thing to pass," said vice president (internal) John Russell. Jay Doucet claimed it was the duty of council to punish so as to discourage repetition of crimes by other councillors or society members. He pointed to two prior occasions of wrongdoing dealt with by last year's council in such a manner that "council gained the image of a weak body who will not take action against any members".

Graduate Studies representative Ken Edgcombe lent a note of caution to the proceedings. "In light of the fact that we represent students, this might not be the kind of thing we'd like to do," he said. "If you impeach Greg Fitzgerald for doing this, we'd be setting a precedent - both for councillors and employees." Observer Geoffrey Seymour, a former council member, also cautioned that he felt no-one in the meeting was talking about how this (the embezzlement) related to Fitzgerald breaching his duty on council.

Chris Hartt noted it was not only Fitzgerald's reputation which had been blemished by the incident, but also council's. "We're not judging by character here," he stated. "We're judging what this man has done as a councillor."

Greg Fitzgerald has not been available to comment on the impeachment.

A unanimous no to uranium mining

by Doug Whittall

Judge Robert J. McCleave's enquiry into uranium exploration and mining in Nova Scotia convened at Dalhousie last Friday and heard all five speakers say they were opposed to uranium mining in the province.

Concerned groups and private citizens told the one-man commission the potential risks associated with uranium mining warrant a seven year moratorium on exploration, or a ban on uranium production altogether. Speakers said they were concerned about the possible

health risks, adverse effects on recreational lands and tourism, and the broader issue of uranium production propagating the worldwide nuclear arms race.

Filmmaker Ian Ball told the enquiry he made a film for the national film board about the Canadian nuclear industry. He said elements within the industry tried to have his film removed from circulation through a government lobby. This kind of attitude in the nuclear industry prompted his presence at the hearing, said Ball. "The industry tried to prevent the people

from weighing the evidence themselves."

The Nova Scotia Voice for Women and the Recreational Association of Nova Scotia also presented briefs to Judge McCleave.

More than 80 groups and individuals have addressed the commission so far in the first stage of hearings. Concerns over the effect of uranium mining in Nova Scotia range from the destruction of recreational and farmland for the sake of employment and progress,

continued on page 6

Disarmament into the '80's - a special Gazette feature inside, pages 9-12.